

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9240

INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

DEA HQS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19784

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (LESTER WOLFF)

SUBJECT: CODEL WOLFF

REF: A) STATE 275371

B) BANGKOK 18216

1. WE CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT THAT THE DEPARTMENT CONVEY TO CONGRESSMAN WOLFF OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE SSA OPIUM AND HEROIN SUPPRESSION SCHEME BEFORE HE LEAVES ON HIS EAST ASIA TRIP, AND SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING POINTS BE EMPHASIZED TO HIM:

(A) NO BURMESE GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO PERMIT THE US OR ANY OTHER AUTHORITY TO DEAL WITH A REBEL FORCE, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE MERITS OF THE SCHEME PROPOSED. ONE SURE RESULT OF THE SCHEME, IF WE FOLLOW THE PLAN OUTLINED PARA. 2 REF B, WOULD BE TO ARM AND SUPPORT, AND THUS TO PERPETUATE, ONE OF THE FORCES NOW IN DISSIDENCE AGAINST THE GUB. IN FACT, WE ASSUME THAT ONE MOTIVATING FACTOR BEHIND THE SSA OFFER IS TO SUBSTITUTE THE CERTAINTY OF A BIG POWER SPONSOR FOR THE UNCERTAINTIES OF RELIANCE ON OPIUM TRAFFICKING FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

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(B) FURTHERMORE, THE SCHEME ITSELF IS COMPLETELY IMPRACTICAL,

AND WE WOULD IMAGINE THAT THE SSA KNOWS THIS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE. IT IS IMPRACTICAL BECAUSE THE SSA IS ONLY ONE, AND CERTAINLY NOT THE STRONGEST, OF THE DISSIDENT AND BANDIT ELEMENTS WHICH CONTROL NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN THE KACHIN AND SHAN STATES. THE SSA ITSELF HAS BEEN WEAKENED OF LATE BY INTERNAL DIVISIONS. TRAFFICKING ELEMENTS WHICH RIVAL OR EXCEED THE SSA IN STRENGTH INCLUDE THE KACHIN INDEPENDENCE ARMY; THE LOI MAW KHA KWE YEI (SHAN UNITED ARMY); THE SHAN UNITED REVOLUTIONARY ARMY AND THE VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS WHOSE LEADERSHIP AND COMPOSITION ARE PREDOMINANTLY YUNNANESE-ORIGIN PERSONS. IF THE SSA SOUGHT TO BECOME AN ENFORCER AGAINST THESE ELEMENTS, IT PROBABLY WOULD BE WIPED OUT IN SHORT ORDER BY A COALITION OF THEM FAR LARGER THAN THE SSA. THE SO-CALLED ALLIES MENTIONED IN THE SCHEME DESCRIPTION (-MUSA PARTY AND ARMY" AND "KARENI PARTY") ARE MINOR ELEMENTS OF NO SIGNIFICANCE IN THE POWER SCENE IN NORTHERN BURMA.

(C) IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE SHOULD ADVISE CONGRESSMAN WOLFF (1) THAT IF THE U.S. WERE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN SUPPORT TO BURMESE DISSIDENTS, WE WOULD ASSUME THAT THE GUB REACTION WOULD BE SO STRONG AS TO ENDANGER OUR RELATIONS WITH THE GUB; (2) THAT HIS OWN CONTACTS WITH SSA ELEMENTS WOULD INEVITABLY BECOME KNOWN TO THE GUB AND COULD WELL JEOPARDIZE THE RECENTLY INITIATED GUB PROGRAM OF COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. AGAINST TRAFFICKING; AND (3) THAT THERE IS NO SHORT CUT TO SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF GOLDEN TRIANGLE OPIUM PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING. (WE ASSUME THAT RANGOON WILL BE COMMENTING MORE FULLY CONCERNING POSSIBLE GUB REACTION.)

2. WE, OF COURSE, WILL BE GLAD TO BRIEF THE CONGRESSMAN THOROUGHLY ON THE NARCOTIC SITUATION BUT REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT LAY BEFORE HIM THE FACTS ABOVE AND ALL THE IMPLICATIONS OF ANY CONTACTS HE MIGHT HAVE WITH THE SSA.

3. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT ANY ACTIVITIES BY THE CONGRESSMAN OF THE NATURE DESCRIBED WOULD HAVE TO BE CLEARED WITH THE RTG. THE RTG MAY WELL BE RELUCTANT TO RISK A MISUNDERSTANDING WITH THE GUB, WITH WHICH IT IS SEEKING BETTER RELATIONS, OVER CONTACTS BETWEEN A PROMINENT U.S. CONGRESSMAN

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AND A BURMESE DISSIDENT FORCE, MEMBERS OF WHICH RESIDE ON THAI TERRITORY. WE ASSUME ALSO THAT THE RTG, ESPECIALLY SUPREME COMMAND AND GENERAL KRIANGSAK, REMAINS SENSITIVE REGARDING ANY U.S. CONTACTS WITH LI WEN-HUAN OR TUAN HSI-WEN, COMMANDERS OF THE 3RD AND 5TH CHINESE IRREGULAR FORCES. AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS, THIS PROBLEM IS RENDERED COMPLEX BECAUSE (A) THE RTG GIVES BOTH LI AND TUAN A ROLE IN THAI BORDER SECURITY AND (B) THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE

THAT LI AND TUAN ARE DIRECTLY ENGAGED IN TRAFFICKING IN THAILAND.

4. WE DO NOT PLAN TO CONTACT THE RTG ON THIS MATTER UNTIL
WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE RESULTS OF THE DEPARTMENT'S
DISCUSSION WITH CONGRESSMAN WOLFF OF THE MORE SENSITIVE ASPECTS
OF HIS TRIP.
KINTNER

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